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Joseph De Camp



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"The Life of an Artist," by Jules Breton

It is a trite saying that the Boston Public Library is a "mine of treasures," but it is none the less true, for all that. Shame on all the sacred cult of art students too lazy or too indifferent to search therein! This, chiefly because one of the most charming books of art student interest has lately been discovered in a state of disgraceful and proper preservation. It is a book to be thumbed, and marked, and worn, and loved. It is the autobiography of Jules Breton. Paris and Paris art schools are of course the dream and desire of all devotees of brush and palette, and in this book there are delightful and intimate descriptions of just the things we want to know. But see for yourselves. After several charming chapters on his childhood and early youth, he comes to Paris to study painting. He says:—

"My father soon returned home, leaving me alone in the whirl of Paris, that desert full of unknown faces.

"For the first few days I was like one dazed, without knowing which way to turn—wandering aimlessly on, losing myself a dozen times, and finding myself in the same street, when I had thought myself miles away.

"Oh, solitude in the midst of a crowd—solitude without peace, how heavily you weighed upon me at first!"

Probably this is the feeling of every stranger when left to their own devices in the Wonder City. The account of the choice of schools is amusing.

"And when my father and I went to visit our compatriot, the doorkeeper at the Louvre, whom I have mentioned, to ask his opinion regarding the studio I ought to enter, he responded gravely: 'It is indispensable that Jules should enter the studio of a member of the institute; there are Messieurs Cognet, Picot, Delaroche, Ingres, and Drolling to choose from.' After reflecting for a moment, he advised us to try Drolling, because a former beadle of the studio was a friend of his.

"My entrance to the Drolling studio was not unattended by some disagreeable incidents. The moment I put my foot inside the door a deafening tumult greeted my ears, and I saw myself surrounded by faces whose expressions, bantering, menacing, or strange, absolutely terrified me. I felt myself at the same time pulled about from one side to another, while I received on my head the blows of the cushions of the tabourets, that rained upon me from all parts of the room.

"It was in this way that new pupils were greeted in those days.

"Quiet being restored, one of the tallest of the students, who, better dressed and more distinguished than the others, appeared to me to be of a superior station, approached me, and asked me very politely:—

"'Where are you from, Monsieur?' I answered in a tone that I tried to render as amiable as possible: 'From Pas-de-Calais.' 'Oh, that is easily seen,' he said, without moving a muscle of his countenance.

"This polite young man was called Timbal.

"Then the oldest of the group, Deligne, a young man from Cambrai, near my native place, came up to me and said: 'See, my boy, there are seven or eight among the students whom I am going to point out to you, and whom it would be well for you to make friends with. As for the others, you may snap your fingers at them.' And then, raising his voice, he said to the students: 'This new pupil is a compatriot of mine; I shall take him under my protection, and let him who dare touch him.'

"From this time forth I was left in peace. I was assigned the task, in accordance with the custom of those days, of taking care of the fire and going on certain errands; and the first time I took my hat from the nail to go on one of these, I saw they had drawn on it with chalk the cockade and aigrette of a lackey.

"At the height of the melee, through the dust raised by the blows of the cushions and the stamping of the feet of the boys, . . . I had caught a glimpse of a young man of quiet demeanor, who was looking at me less mockingly than the others.

"His countenance at once arrested my attention. He was short, thick-set, very dark, with hair the color of the raven's wing, that rose abruptly from the head, and then fell down in a twisted lock over the straight forehead. His eyes, which were deep-set and very black, shone from beneath overhanging brows. A budding mustache shaded his short upper lip, and his mouth, notwithstanding the proximity of the square jaw and the prominent chin, denoting self-will, had a sweet and melancholy expression. It was the face of an eagle touched with feeling. It was Paul Baudry."

Later on we find Jules intensely interested in contemporary art and artists. The descriptions and analyses are keen and amusing.

"This movement toward truth to nature had, so far as form and modeling are concerned, a powerful leader in Ingres, . . .

"He was a great and remarkable figure, this painter, whom Traeult wittily called a 'Chinese, strayed into Athens.'

"In his person, as his style, there were surprising anomalies.

"Physically he has something sacerdotal in his appearance.

"Is he a dignitary of the church or a parish beadle? One can hardly tell.

"His proportions are almost grotesque. He has very short legs, a large abdomen, arms extraordinarily long; the lower part of the face is wanting in dignity; the nose is ordinary, as they say in the passports; the chin is round and receding, the cheeks are large and flabby; the mouth is sensual, though not wanting in character: this is the beadle side. But the eyes and the forehead are extremely beautiful. The dark pupils seem to flash fire under the eyebrows, which indicate strong self-will, modified by the descending line toward the temple, indicating piety. Here we seem to see the highest dignitary in the world of art. The same contradiction exists in his talent. In the beginning a disciple of David, he fell, later on, under the influence of Raphael. He soon had flashes of sentiment, which revealed to him marvelous accents of nature.

In an inspiration of genius he recognized the sentiment of Phidias. Of Phidias! The divinest incarnation of the living ideal! Then Ingres, like another Polyeuctus, dethrones the false gods. Down with you, Venus de Medici and Apollo Belvidere, whom our fathers and David himself have worshiped! Your progeny, with their insipid beauty, their cold eyes, their limbs rounded like architectural mouldings, is already numerous enough. Down with you! And, indeed, in some admirable compositions he attains to ideality of form, expressive and beautiful without being insipid, graceful delineation, firm and flexible modeling, richness and variety of composition.

"As I have said, he attains this by flashes, for he places side by side beauties of the highest order and defects that are ridiculous at times, making limbs which seem to have no joints, twisting the bones, spoiling noble conceptions by childish blunders or bourgeois vulgarity."

This is by no means the Ingres at his best whom we are taught to worship. And it is doubtful whether a contemporary

can give us a really valuable opinion of his work. Until the perspective which time brings is established, the relations are bound to be distorted. Nevertheless in this personal age we must know all that we can of the intimate details which were obviously not intended for us to know.

How and where the great man walked, and ate, and slept, what he said to his cook, and how he treated his model,—all this is of interest to us, if not of importance, and much of it is to be found in "The Life of an Artist." In a translation the style is necessarily affected by the French construction, which to my mind only makes the book more charming. And primarily it inspires us with a desire to know the man's work, to a great curiosity about the pictures over which the young artist laughed, and toiled, and wept; to admire his successes and lament his failures. In short, the book makes a distinct personal appeal, is delightfully written, and contains much of interest.

Freshman Reception

As is the custom of the school, the Senior Class will entertain the first-year students with a reception and dance. This event will take place in the school hall on the evening of January 13 at eight o'clock. Mr. Bartlett and several members of the faculty will receive the students between eight and half-past eight o'clock. It is hoped that there will be a large attendance at this dance, as the committee in charge promise all a most enjoyable evening.

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The exhibitions have been rather infrequent this month, but we look forward to January as promising more. It is hoped that by then the alterations to the Art Club will have been completed, and that the gallery on the third floor will be opened with a show in keeping with the new facilities.

In November Helena Sturtevant exhibited some of her work at the Copley Gallery. The out-of-doors canvases were much more successful than the interiors, and in particular her portraits were far from pleasing, through their lack of realization of light and shade and color values. The drawing, also, was inaccurate. In this respect "A New England Farmer's Daughter" was less noticeable than the other figure canvases. "Across the Ledges to the Sea" had a confusing foreground, but the distance looked reasonable. "Early Spring, Newport," was pleasantly composed. The carrying power of "Mending Nets" seemed greater than most of the others, but "Indian Summer" was the best of the pure landscapes. The treetops in the foreground were well suggested, and the picture was simply painted, with a broad technique. Following Miss Sturtevant's exhibition came Henry Plympton Spaulding's, at the same gallery. Like hers, his canvases sometimes lack both subtlety and boldness. He sometimes allows uncompromising

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silhouettes to interfere with his unity of design, and a certain hardness is apparent in his shadows. "In the Gulf Stream" is one of the pictorial and successful compositions. "The Willow Road" is another. "Near Rapallo" has a different technique from the others, and a more fortunate one, so far as a feeling for sunlight and open air is concerned. Water-color is the medium used for all.

It seems hardly necessary to mention the splendid exhibition of our instructors' work which has just been held at the Grundmann Studios. Probably nearly every student has been there and seen for himself how proud we ought to be of our instructors, and certain of the alumni, besides. It is the general desire that a collection of this kind may be shown every year. The following artists were represented: Messrs. Bartlett, De Camp, Major, Munsell, Hamilton, Cross, Sawyer, Andrew, Dallin, Jepson, and Furlong, and Miss Hathaway.

From November 26 until December 8 Doll and Richards exhibited some Spanish paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are twenty-two canvases listed in the catalogue, but not all were hung. Some of the pictures, as Greco's, lack the "healthiness" evident in most of the old Flemish and Italian work, and some are painted mosaically, with an eye that concerns itself more with the intricacy of the design applied to a drapery or accessory than with the big masses. One of the most marvelous in this particular is "Isabella Clara Eugenia, Infanta of Spain." by Sanchez Coello. The flesh in this portrait is very subtle in modeling. There are four examples of Greco's work, probably earlier than the one in the Museum. "St. Stefano," by Alonzo Cano, has a bold, adequate design and simple drapery, and the head is well made. unusual in dispensing with needless detail. Like honors are shared by the "San Juan" of Zurbaran. Murillo has a "Portrait of a Man," simple in design and chiaroscuro. The "Portrait of a Boy," School of Murillo, is inferior to the master's own work, but the face possesses a strange vividness, in spite of its lack of color. Other artists represented were: Bocanegra, Claudio Coello, Juanes, Lopez, March, Miranda, Morales, Pantoja de la Cruz, Ribera, and Tristan.

During the coming year Harper's Monthly will publish a series of articles by Charles H. Caffin on living European painters, his sketches on the work of American artists having ended some time ago. This month he writes of Harold Speed, a young Englishman, and the paper is illustrated by photographs of Mr. Speed's pictures. Mr. Caffin intimates that, while Amerian painters excel in landscape, in portraiture and genre work they are surpassed by the Englishmen. Do you suppose that Mr. Caffin has ever cast his eye on some of the recent purchases of the Boston Art Museum?

The December Scribner's contains "The Seasons," by N. C. Wyeth, which are examples of his best work, compositions of refined and concentrated strength. Looking at them, you realize that it isn't so much what you know and express, as what you know and repress, that makes for force. In the same magazine there is a paper by Frank Fowler on "Portraits as Decoration," and an article by Frank Weitenkampf on "Some Women Etchers." Examples are given of the work of both foreign and American etchers, among the latter Mary Cassatt.

The International Studio presents an appreciation of the work of William Merritt Chase. We Boston people have not many opportunities of seeing the canvases of this man, who is noted both as a portrait and a still life painter, though we all remember the still life that was shown at the Art Museum, and the "Old Etching" hung at the Ten Americans' Show last April. The author of the Studio article ranks Mr. Chase as one of

the most virile painters in the United States to-day. are many painters who use their medium as a necessary, though troublesome, means to an end; but the very materials with which Chase paints a picture are apparently a source of pleasure to him, and the gayety and ease with which he handles them are in a large measure communicated to his public." Mr. Chase studied first in America, and later in Munich. His first important exhibition was held at the Boston Art Club in 1886, when he was thirty-seven years old. In the same magazine there is a paper by A. Lys Baldry on "The Art of Edward John Gregory, R. A.," an English artist who is not living now. Philip Hale has an interesting article about William MacGregor Paxton, a "Ten American." There are three illustrations: "The Listener," "Cherry," and "The Pearl Necklace." The first two were shown at Mr. Paxton's exhibition at the St. Botolph Club last year, and "The Pearl Necklace" two years ago. "The note of Mr. Paxton's work is sincerity." never was a man who tried harder to get the aspect of things, the look of nature, and very few have been more successful. . . . When one sees a picture in his studio beside the model, and compares them in the mirror across the room, there is no appreciable difference between the picture and the model." Paxton's art education was obtained, first at the Cowles Art School, under Dennis Bunker, and then in Paris, at the École des Beaux Arts, and also with Gêrome and Julian. . . . By the way, you know there is a new Paxton at the Art Museum. The department of the Studio called "In the Galleries" contains a reproduction of "The Annunciation to the Shepherds," by Bastien Lepage, with an accompanying description in the text.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everybody!

If, as Oliver Wendell Holmes claims, the expression of a true and helpful idea does not lose its beauty or its force by

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repetition, then we may be allowed to echo again that much-quoted sentiment of Tiny Tim's:—

"GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!"

KATHARINE M. SAWIN.

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Christianity

Bishop—"Now, tell me about your church."

Manson (very simply)—"I am afraid that you may not consider it an altogether substantial concern. It has to be seen in a certain way, under certain conditions. Some people never see it at all. You must understand, this is no dead pile of stone

and unmeaning timber. It is a living thing.

"When you enter it you hear a sound—a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough, and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears. If you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself, a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome. The work of no ordinary mortal."

Bishop—"On the security of one man's name."

Manson—"The pillars of it go up like the brawny trunks of heroes; the sweet human flesh of men and women is moulded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable; the faces of little children laugh out from every corner-stone; the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the number-less musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness, sometimes in blinding light; now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish, now to the tune of great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. (Softer.) Sometimes, in the silence of the night time, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead."

—From "The Servant in the House."

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All over! And the Junior Class heaved one large, concentrated, simultaneous sigh, in which relief and weariness were mingled with pride and satisfaction. From the feminine point of view, which is the one with which we are most familiar, the costume party was an absolute, unqualified success, which means in perfectly plain English that there were more than enough men to go round, and that they were all perfectly and entirely charming and delightful. What should have produced this abnormal state of affairs we cannot say, unless that it was due to the more than ordinary display of feminine charms and graces. This there undoubtedly was, so, if the masculine viewpoint in any way resembles the feminine, we may vote the dance an all-round success. Out of a maze of incongruous small-talk stands the wistful remark of a solemn, hollow-eyed friar: "I wish I had a sketch-book." We wished that he had. There would have been a strange collection. The gaudy swashbuckling pirate gaily cavorting in the barn dance with the dainty minuet lady of the powder and patches, and next the Yama-Yamas, a goodly row, with pompons or chous—whichever they were—stuck on in a rakish and adorable manner. Mr. Fox, Mr. Fox! If you didn't see him we're sorry. perhaps you can imagine how he would look in a short pink gingham dress confined about the waist (?), as the society re-

porters say, by a broad sash of pink ribbon, and he sang his laughing song until our sides ached. The way that man can make you laugh, whether you want to or not, is exasperating. Then our "Adonis" of the enviable pink and white cheeks had cruelly concealed them beneath a thick coat of black paint. The green of his vest was the greenest green we ever saw, and he sang a song all about his Ma-ha-ha-ma. The credit of making the song goes to Mr. Brennan, and likewise two others that he sang himself amidst great applause. His waist line was a match for Mr. Fox's, but there was a difference, we believe. Jesters, shepherds and shepherdesses, monks and warriors, the necessary characters for a wedding, a funeral, a cowboy round-up, or twenty French comedies. We are glad it came in December, for as the procession filed into the hall it might well have been a Yuletide pageant in Olde England, except for the Yule-log and the choristers, the Christmas goose (which we'll have yet), and the glorious flaming plum pudding, with the holly and mistletoe. Several remarked upon the absence of Santa Claus, but we understand that he was very busy getting in his Christmas stock, which is to consist largely this year, we believe, of anatomical charts and portions of the human skeleton for distribution amongst the Junior Class. "Cheer up, it may not be true."

WE teach! Yea, verily, some of us. Little children, with wise eyes, and curious baby notions, and adorable, inefficient, dirty little hands, before whom we are reduced to a state of abject cowardice and frantic nervousness. Not that they are rough or unmanageable children. They merely look. Long, quiet, searching looks, all over us and up and down, until we feel that they "could pass an examination in every button" that we have on. We approached the first lesson with fear and

trembling. The Lady Principal left us, after an introduction beginning importantly, "Now, children, this is your new teacher, whom I hope," etc. We cleared our throat weakly, and smiled an indifferently assumed bright smile. "Now, children," we also began, but stopped. We envied the bromidic ease of the remarks of the Lady Principal. The pause was growing painful. "Perhaps," timidly, yet desperately, "I had better take your names," and by the time the Russian, Swedish, Jewish, and Pollack appellatives were mastered and safely secured in black and white, the ice was smashed to bits. We found ourselves growing chummy and confidential to a dangerous degree, and quickly recovered our sliding dignity. Consulting notes, carefully compiled from Mr. George's lectures, we began what we intended to be a truly noble speech on "The Principles of Design." We spoke authoritatively concerning utility, variety, monotony, simplicity, and finally emerged from our oratorical orgy to find the class peacefully pursuing its road towards real life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. After our feelings got over being hurt, we descended to describing "ostentatious display" merely as having too many "squirms and wiggles," which they seemed to understand, and devoted much of our valuable time to lectures on the reasons for which soap is manufactured, and rash predictions as to its efficacy when employed with H₂ O slightly warmed.

When we told the Lamp-post about "our class," he sniffed. "Don't you think you are very foolish to try to teach those children something you don't know anything about yourself?" he asked. Certainly we know we are foolish, and down inside where we keep our conscience we have a horribly guilty feeling. We don't admit this to the Lamp-post, however, for he, aided by the aforesaid conscience, would persuade us that it was our duty to turn over the class to some one more efficient, and we

don't want to a bit. The children are too dear and funny. To-day we intercepted a note, and basely read it after school, and found it to contain the cabalistic words: "Beets the blub-blub-blub-blub," which so exactly presents our muddled ideas on the subject that we intend to adopt it as a kind of slogan. And then, too, the "experience" is coming in bunches, and the teachers are learning so rapidly that possibly they will be able to design something fairly respectable to bestow upon their own long-suffering families before Christmas gets around.

In Alfred Steven's' little book, "Impressions of a Painter," we find many words of wisdom:—

"Great workers must not be confounded with mere drudges."

"A painter is constantly at work, even outside his studio."
"The more one knows the more one simplifies."

Now, around Christmas time, when all sorts of mystery is in the air, when people somehow show their lovableness a bit more than usual, and our thoughts will wander from the nagging, worrying tasks that simply must be done to the more fascinating realms of Christmas festivities, if we indulge in a little self-analysis, we find ourselves in a state of good humor and hilarious enjoyment that we have hardly attained to since, we grieve to say, summer play-days were over. "Why is it," the Lamp-post has often complained, "that when you are good you are always cross?" Which wasn't exactly what he meant. It's this nasty New England conscience, this persistent sense of duty, this feeling that so-o much work has to be done, and a bewildered knowledge of the impossibleness of ever doing it, that somehow makes little nervous wrinkles in our foreheads and snappy impatience in our voices. It's just possible that the fac-

ulty has not noticed these horrible signs of overwork. However, let us not argue about that. We were saying that so many people, in the ardor of conscientiousness, quite forget to be happy. Obviously it's not worth while. There's absolutely nothing to be commended in it. There's more virtue in one reckless, happy hour out under the stars, in one silly, happy little verse, in one haphazard, flaming little sketch done because you couldn't help it than in all the fuss, and worry, and digging of the most conscientious of all conscientious students. Conscience? What's a conscience—at Christmas time—except to forget and be happy? Duty? What's duty—in vacation—but to make the others forget and be happy? And work? In the name of all inspired idiots, what is work? This is the time to play!

A Writer's Request of His Master

Lord, let me never tag a moral to a story, nor tell a story without a meaning. Make me respect my material so much that I dare not slight my work. Help me to deal very honestly with words and with people because they are both alive. Show me that as in a river, so in a writing, clearness is the best quality, and a little that is pure is worth more than much that is mixed. Teach me to see the local color without being blind to the inner light. Give me an ideal that will stand the strain of weaving into human stuff on the loom of the real. Keep me from caring more for books than for folks, for art than for life. Steady me to do my full stint of work as well as I can; and when that is done, stop me, pay what wages Thou wilt, and help me to say, from a quiet heart, a grateful Amen.—Henry van Dyke.

The Fortune-Teller

(By Josephine Preston Peabody, in Scribner's Magazine.)

"Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief."

Highway, stretched along the sun,
Highway, thronged till day is done;
Where the drifting face replaces
Wave on wave on wave of faces,
And you count them, one by one:

"Rich man—poor man, beggar man—thief:
Doctor—lawyer—merchant—chief."
Is it soothsay? Is it fun?

Young ones, like as wave and wave;
Old ones, like as grave and grave;
Tide on tide of human faces
With what human undertow!
Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief!—
Tell me of the eddying places,
Show me where the lost ones go.
Like and lost, as leaf and leaf.
What's your secret grim refrain
Back and forth and back again,
Once, and now, and always so?
Three days since and who was thief?
Three days more and who'll be chief?
Oh, is that beyond belief,
Doctor—lawyer—merchant—chief?

(Down like grass before the mowing; On like wind in its mad going: Wind and dust forever blowing.)

Highway, shrill with murderous pride, Highway, of swarming tide! Why should my way lead me deeper? I am not my brother's keeper.

EDITORIALS

IF you say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," don't you see that you give him an advantage? Drive him before you.

Well, it's Christmas. Who says "Humph"? Some people are always trying to tear down, to pull things up by the roots, to get behind the scenes, to get in amongst the cogs and cranks and wheels and gearings of things, but they only succeed in making themselves miserable, and trying to analyze Christmas is like seeing the drained bed of the pond in the public garden, or like looking at the back of a mirror.

Every little once in a while we cannot help enthusing over the craftiness with which this world was planned, we mean the algebraic equation part of it. We have a very firm root theory that everything—from the tiny footprints of a wood mouse in the snow to the hot panting of a locomotive in a train shed—is in exquisitely wonderful balance, is part of a delicately constructed—if constructed it was—mechanism.

First of all there is weather—we think everyone should study the weather; it's cheap, it's everywhere, and it's very necessary. It is one of the many things which we growl at, and yet, unexisting, would leave a very monotonous world, and personally, we believe there is more religion to be gotten out of one golden sunset than a cartload of haloes.

And then there are the golden, irresponsible days of childhood. Could anything be more fitting than this? If children knew with what longing and yearning and regret they would look back at their childhood days, how differently they would live them. And yet the not knowing is the most exquisite part of it all. Truly it is a most wonderful place, but, of course, it all depends upon the point of view. As Oscar Wilde says of "Salome" so might be said of the world: "In it there is art for the artist, vulgarity for the vulgar, and dullness for the dull."

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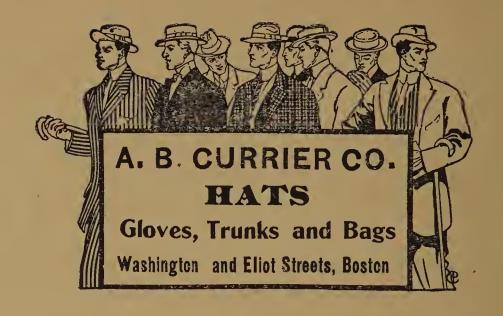
If you wish to put yourself in perspective, study astronomy.

It is well that we don't know more of the hereafter—we might all commit suicide.

Many men are like the pawns in a chess game—they are content to move with the multitude; but did you ever notice that the men worth while, the big men, the men back in the king row, each have a different manner of moving?

Just because you happen to be walking down Atlantic avenue with a wooden sketch box in your hand, and some one stops you and asks for a "shine," don't get mad. Think of the joke on the bootblack.

A church fair is when they come around and get you to give them stuff, and then let you pay to get in so that you may buy it back.



FIVE MEN OF ONE MIND

- WALTER SARGENT, Recently Supervisor of Drawing. Boston.
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